7: Thompson--185-186 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 276, 655

"Laos's opium Régie [JUM: government agency charged with administering an indirect tax] was always directly administered because it presented the unique feature of a soil suitable to poppy growing. The natives had always grown enough for their own needs, so the government subsidized local efforts for a large-scale production. The result was not without charm. Two colonists in different regions were given seed and piastres. After two years, officially given to ruthless labour, an Inspector was sent to report. One of the colonists claimed that the seed [186] he had sown never came up. The other was more cynical: 'I am a remarkable man,' he told the Inspector. 'Potatoes grow where I sowed poppy seed.' (1)

1. Salé, G., Histoires Coloniales (Paris, 1931), p. 84."

10: d'Orleans--362-363 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 276, 439, 655, 177.27 Siam
636.27

"...The opium monopoly has been set up in Luang Prabang by the Siamese. Not content with having, during the past century, ruined and depopulated the valley of the Mekong, and with weighing it down with taxation, they now seem anxious to crush its trade and arrest its growth. From our point of view, it is a matter of indifference to us if the relations between Luang Prabang and China become less close and friendly, and we may even turn this change to our profit, for the caravans which were wont to bring opium down the routes parallel with the Mekong, will find it answer [sic] their purpose to branch off in the direction of the Black River, and to effect their exchanges with Upper Tonkin.

I can answer for the fact that during the past year only one caravan reached Luang Prabang from the north, this consisting of sixty mules from Xieng [363] Hong, which took a month upon the journey by short stages, eight being loaded with iron, four with tea, and the rest with Chinese groceries, sugar, opium and a little silk."

642 Indo-Chinese Federation.

The commercial agencies on the right bank, whose number had
439 reached ten, were fully functioning in 1895, but the duties of their
655 directors had been so ill defined /340/ /Page 340 is devoted to a map: "Laos in the Indo-Chinese Federation."--Translator/ /341/ that these posts did not render any real service. No one dared to suppress them officially, however, for fear that Bangkok's agents
/648/ might find an argument in such suppression for aggravating still further their maneuvers among the populace of the restricted zone. France was content merely with removing the directors and placing control of the agencies in the hands of the nearest government commissioners.

Further Franco-Siamese negotiations. Indeed, the Siamese governors did not cease to act in contravention of the provisions of the agreement appended to the treaty of 1893. They particularly endeavored, by intimidation, to prevent the former inhabitants of the left bank who had been transferred to or detained on the right bank from leaving the restricted zone and having recourse to the French agents for help. In Bangkok itself the trial of the Pra Yott had resulted in an acquittal, and an appeal by Attorney General Ducos (1), who was sent to Siam specially to draw up the indictment,

1. Attorney General in Hanoi. Later he was lieutenant-governor of Cochinchina (1896-1897) and superior resident in Cambodia (1897-1901).

and the formation of a mixed tribunal had been needed to obtain conviction of the guilty party. As for the incident /342/ of Tong-Xieng-Kham, criminal proceedings in the case were always suspended! Yet in the course of a voyage to Europe King Chulalongkorn had had a long conversation in Paris in 1897 about the consequences of the treaty with Foreign Minister Hanotaux, to whom he had given the most reassuring promises. In 1899 Governor General Doumer had returned this visit in Bangkok and, by the terms of the extremely cordial talks which he had with the chief officials, he had believed as he left Siam that a final agreement was imminent. All these courteous gestures, however, had not been followed by any change in the attitude of the Siamese agents on the Mekong, and Minister Defrance continued to formulate constant claims...

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Tax on rice, paddy, horns, hides, etc.

	Per picul (francs)	Per hundred kilograms (francs)
Paddy	0.25	0.416
Rice	0.50	0.832
Gum lac	2.50	4.16
Chinese nettle	2.50	4.16
Buffalo horns and hides	2.50	4.16
Buck horns and hides	3.75	6.25
Anteater scales	3.75	6.25
Cardamom	5.00	8.32
Elephant and tiger bones	3.75	6.25
Benzoin	12.50	20.82
Rubber	12.50	20.82
Wax	12.50	20.82
Ivory	50.00	83.20
Pirogues	ten percent ad valorem.	

Also to be added are certain incidental receipts, such as those arising from chancery fees or those collected by the native tribunals in conformity with the rates scheduled by the code of Vien-Tiane.

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The royal treasury of Luang-Prabang subsidizes certain expenses, such as the upkeep of the kingdom's militia, of the native hospital in Luang-Prabang, of the France-Laotian school in Luang-Prabang, etc. [504]

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Finally, the general budget of Indo-China pays out a variable sum annually for the purpose of balancing the receipts and expenditure of Laos.

C. Opium

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One of the most important sources of Laotian revenue is provided by the sale of opium. The administration is responsible for the sale of this substance, which it manufactures itself and which is marketed by licensed merchants acting as middlemen.

Before 1900, Laos sold on its own behalf the opium which was allotted to it by the Cochinchina Customs and Excise Office (1).

(1) This was true only for Lower Laos. The opium sold in Upper Laos came from the Luang-Prabang distillery, which is no longer in operation today.

651 paid for these allotments in cash, and took in as receipts the difference between the allotment price and the sale price. Today, as a consequence of the establishment of a general budget for Indo-China, Laos sells directly on behalf of the Customs and Excise Office and pays this office the entire sum resulting from sales made.

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The following are the sale prices, per kilogram, of the Customs and Excise opium in the various provinces of Laos in 1900 and 1901:

	1900 (francs)	1901 (francs)
Hua-Phan	90.00	100.00
Tran-Ninh	75.00	100.00
Luang-Prabang	100.00	100.00
Vien-Tiane	92.50	112.50
Seng-Khone and Cammon	100.00	112.50
Ban-Mouang and Saravane	107.50	125.00
Khong and Attopeu	112.50	125.00
Stung-Treng	125.00	137.50

276 In 1898, total opium sales were 150,450 francs. If the total population of Laos is estimated at 500,000, then each inhabitant would consume an average of 0.3009 franc's worth of opium per [505] year. This is a negligible amount, if we compare it with that in neighboring countries, as demonstrated by the following table:

Country	Total Population	Total opium sales in francs	Average share per inhabitant in francs
French Laos	500,000	150,450	0.3009
Siamese Laos	700,000	440,000	0.6282
Siam	6,700,000	7,758,500	1.155

It does not follow, however, that the inhabitants of Laos smoke less opium than their neighbors, but rather that fraud is more rampant there than elsewhere.

It is estimated that the minimum opium consumption in Laos must be 3.50 francs' worth per registered person and per year. Now, since registered persons represent an average of 22 to 24 percent of the total population, opium sales must bring in receipts of about 400,000 francs and the share per inhabitant must be 0.8 franc, a figure approaching the norm between the average figures for Siamese Laos and for Siam.